

# Session 7c

## Paper

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### Considering the emergence of student curiosity: a conceptual exploration

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#### Program text

This paper offers a conceptual discussion of student curiosity. We often assume and assert it to be 'a good thing' when it comes to teaching and learning, but what exactly are we referring to?

#### Abstract

The phenomenon we have come to know as curiosity is an interesting one. When associated with both teaching and studying it is taken for granted as 'a good thing'. In everyday discourse as well as in professional literature we meet the notion that teachers should ideally be curious about students and their learning and, by implication, about pedagogy, and students should ideally be curious about the subject matter at hand (and about how to be a student and how to learn). However, what exactly is meant by curiosity is often elided. In this paper I wish to conceptually explore student curiosity and what it might look like from the point of view of educational philosophy. In some instantiations curiosity is transient and trivial, in others it signifies an event with irreversible effects. Being particularly interested in the latter experience I want to consider how we might conceptualise curiosity outside and as different from the psychological notion of curiosity as something that needs to be stimulated to enhance learning, that is, a form of intrinsic motivation (see for example Pluck and Johnson, 2011). Drawing on John Dewey (1916, 1938), how might we think of the experience of curiosity as 'educative' and, drawing on Geert Biesta (2013), how might we think of it as an 'event of subjectivity'? Following this examination I will suggest that curiosity rather than being a prerequisite for learning or a personality trait that students can have and exhibit to various degrees is an experience of true education. This holds implications for teaching as it invites a shift from considering how curiosity can be stimulated to how it may emerge.

#### Author(s)

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#### Literature

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